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Mormon Saints

THE STORY OF JOSEPH SMITH, HIS GOLDEN BIBLE, AND THE CHURCH HE FOUNDED

BY

GEORGE SEIBEL

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¶ It is often and truly said, that past ages were pre-eminently credulous, as compared with our own; yet the difference is not so much in the amount of the credulity, as in the direction which it takes. Men are always prepared to accept, on very slight evidence, what they believe to be exceedingly probable.

—*Lecky.*

The Mormon Saints

CHAPTER I

An American Islam

THE history of the Mormon church forms one of the strangest and most startling chapters in the annals of the Nineteenth Century. The French philosopher Salverte has said that man is credulous because he is naturally sincere. Yet it seems almost beyond belief that such a crude farrago of superstition, if not fraud, as Mormonism could be brought forth by the most enlightened age of the world, an age in which science has worked her greatest marvels and culture has been diffused over all lands. Buddha, Krishna, Mithra, Apollonius, and other demigods who founded miraculous religions, belong to the remote past and to distant climes. We flatter ourselves that their revelations prospered because they came long ago and far away. But Mormonism arose almost yesterday, amid universities and libraries, as if to prove that man is the same in all ages—as if to demonstrate the truth of what Gregory Nazianzen

wrote to St. Jerome: "A little jargon is all that is necessary to impose on the people. The less they comprehend, the more they admire."

Almost a century has passed, and the followers of Mormon are still among us—and while missionary societies are sending abroad thousands of men and millions of money to bring the heathen unto Christ, a terrible canker has attacked the heart of Christianity at home. Mormon apostles are swarming through the land, sowing their doctrine broadcast. Most amazing of all is the fact that they are meeting with success, and while many orthodox denominations complain of stagnation and decline, the church of the Latter-Day Saints is forging steadily ahead, gaining ground in fashion marvelous.

It will be the aim of these pages to inquire into the origin of that church—a hierarchy, rather; to trace the Cagliostro-like career of its founder, and its rise unto power despite intelligent opposition and shameful persecution; to examine its "supernatural revelation" by the higher criticism of common sense; finally, to consider whether its institutions are antagonistic to those laws upon which rests the well-being of the nation and of society—and, if they are, to suggest a remedy.

The purpose ever kept in view will be

to weigh, not blindly to condemn. To enumerate the sources drawn upon and the authorities consulted would needlessly encumber the account; the wonder tales of Mormon writers and the rabid concoctions of their foes have alike been cautiously sifted. Nought is set down in malice—though the historian expressly reserves the right to smile at human folly where he finds it.

The peculiar people who colonized the valley of the Great Salt Lake have many admirable qualities commending them to favor; the impartial historian may not shut his eyes to these. Perhaps these virtues are more to be feared than their vices. For, if the beliefs, doctrines, and practices of the Mormons are dangerous to society, there is reason for the gravest apprehension, and need of the most energetic measures to render them harmless. Truly marvelous has been the spread of the Mormon faith. Joseph Smith in 1827 proclaimed his discovery of the golden plates whereon was inscribed the *Book of Mormon.* Three years later the first church was organized with six members; to-day, after less than a century, the Mormon faith numbers nearly half a million adherents. It is doubtful whether Christianity had gained that number of converts by the end of its first century.

There is no parallel to the successes of Mormonism except in those of Islam, which it resembles in many other respects. Like the religion of Mahomet, it claims to supplement and supplant Christianity—to be a second thought of God, with the implication that second thoughts are best. Like Mahometanism, it has a special revelation, committed to its founder by an angel from heaven. Like Mahometanism, it is extremely practical and not at all mystical: it fills the flesh-pots of the faithful and enjoins no strenuous asceticism. Like Mahometanism, it believed in the missionary potency of the sword. One of the earliest writers upon the subject styled Joseph Smith the American Mahomet—a comparison which in no way violates the truth of history, save that the camel-driver and prophet of Mecca was probably a sincere fanatic, whereas the seer of Palmyra was more likely a cunning impostor.

This excrescence of Christianity has steadily grown at a rate faster than the nation. The advance guard which entered Utah in 1847 numbered only 148; to-day Utah, excepting Salt Lake City and Ogden, is overwhelmingly Mormon, and the church to a great extent holds the balance of political power in the adjoining states—Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Mon-

tana, Arizona, and New Mexico. It rules absolutely over a region as large as the combined area of New York and Pennsylvania, and is a potent factor in every part of the great West. It sends its elders—missionaries in the apostolic sense, without "purse or scrip"—to Mexico, to the republics of Central and South America, to the islands of the Pacific, to Australia, to India, to the Cape Colony and the Transvaal, to Turkey, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, even to England. They overrun the Southern states and the Northwest, and boast that they gained over sixty thousand converts during one year alone—more than any other religious denomination in the United States during the same period. The Mormons outnumber many sects that make a great deal more noise. An idea of their strength may be gained from the fact that they are almost as numerous as the adherents of the great and respected Episcopalian Church.

Counterfeiting humility when it served their purpose, they have never failed to display an overweening arrogance when in power. When they attained statehood for Utah, they paralyzed the arm of Federal jurisdiction. Then the meek mask was thrown off, and offensive usages sanctioned by the church were again openly prac-

ticed and brazenly defended. Judges and juries in Utah were under their thumb, and even those who were not for them dared not pronounce against them, or at best connived at grave misdemeanors by imposing trifling fines upon Saints that happened to get caught. They even went to the extent of electing to the United States Congress a notorious and self-confessed violator of the state law against polygamy—virtually saying to the nation: "What are you going to do about it?" And to-day, through Senator Reed Smoot, they are influential in all caucuses and councils of the powerful Republican faction.

There is a tremendous truth in the words which Mark Twain, that philosopher who put on the mask of a humorist, uttered through his *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*: "I was afraid of a united church; it makes a mighty power, the mightiest conceivable, and then when it by and by gets into selfish hands, as it is always bound to do, it means death to human liberty and paralysis to human thought."

There are sects which proclaim insanities more iniquitous than the tenets of the "Saints"—but they lack the peculiar vitality of Mormonism and hence are comparatively harmless. They have their

day, and are forgotten, but Mormonism is spreading both as a religious body and a political force. To the elements of danger already indicated there is joined the militant spirit of the theocracy. It has not hesitated at violence and bloodshed to maintain itself. Wherever the Mormons have gone, their presence has often engendered civil strife. They form a state within the state—they submit to the government, but do not acquiesce in it. What manifestation of implacable hostility—never effaced—could be plainer than the flags of Salt Lake City flying at half-mast on the Fourth of July, the nation's birthday? The country has had several Mormon wars—and, as one historian put it, after the lapse of half a century the problem "has not yet yielded to the force of logic or the logic of force."

CHAPTER II

"Joe Smith, Prophet"

"Ye shall know them by their fruits," says Scripture, and adds: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Whether we judge Joseph Smith by Mormonism, or that faith by its founder, the result is very much the same. But an inquiry into the Prophet's antecedents and character will be found instructive as a commentary upon the gullibility of mankind. There have been many false prophets, religious quacks, high-priests of humbug, from Simon Magus to Teed the Koresh. None has gained power over his dupes so easily; none has exploited their credulity for his own profit with greater impudence; none has erected a "religion" more transparent than that system of lunacy and lechery foisted upon his followers by the Scotch-Yankee Messiah of Mormonism.

Joe Smith was born December 23, 1805, at Sharon, Vermont. The threadbare phrase must be reversed in his case—he came "of poor but disreputable parents." They removed to Palmyra, New York, in

1815, Joseph Smith senior having infringed upon the government monopoly of "making money," and escaped punishment only by turning state's evidence. In Palmyra, the pursuits of the family—Joe was the fourth of nine children—ranged from the prosaic peddling of rootbeer to fortune-telling and digging for buried treasure. Many good people pointed the finger of scorn and suspicion at them, while chicken-coops and smoke-houses were watched with special vigilance as a result of nocturnal raids. They were an illiterate, shiftless, whiskey-drinking tribe—and Joseph was not least among them in laziness and other evil propensities. But he was a "genus," as his father used to say; he could with utmost solemnity utter the most palpable untruths, he was fertile in schemes of every kind, and was an omnivorous reader of the "buckets of blood" literature extant in that day. His favorite books in his youth were the *Life of Stephen Burroughs,* a religious impostor whom he seems to have chosen for a patron saint, and the *Life of Captain Kidd,* whose career he could not well emulate, being far from the sea, but whose buried treasures, dreamed of and diligently dug for, may have been the germ of the "Golden Bible" discovered in Mormon Hill. And we further learn that poetry,

as well as biography, had charms for Joseph, his favorite stanza being—

"My name was Robert Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed,
And most wickedly I did,
God's laws I did forbid,
As I sailed, as I sailed."

Blood-and-thunder literature was not as plentiful nor as cheap then as it is now, or Joe might never have opened the Bible; as it was, he later became quite familiar with parts of the Old and New Testaments, and the fanciful stories he invented began to take on a religious cast. The morbidly superstitious nature of his mother, who believed in dreams and saw visions, also must have influenced him greatly.

With the aid of a curious piece of quartz, found while digging a well, Joseph embarked upon fortune-telling. It may be proper to add that the well had not been dug by him, for he had a deep-seated antipathy to every sort of undignified exertion. He preferred more lucrative and less arduous avocations, such as the possession of the magic peek-stone now opened to him—pretending to be able by its agency to recover lost or stolen property and find hidden pirate hoards. Many people paid him money for the exercise of his clairvoyant gifts. One easygoing and

superstitious farmer furnished a sheep for a blood-offering in treasure-seeking incantations—which sheep was promptly transformed into mutton under the auspices of the budding prophet's mother. When the lost property failed to turn up, or the chest of gold did not materialize, Joe had ever an ingenious explanation for the failure, and nearly always managed to placate the wrath of his disappointed dupes. Such was the boyhood of Joe Smith at Fayette and Manchester, whither his parents had removed in 1819.

A revival broke out, opening up a new field for the idle and imaginative young scamp, who first became a Methodist probationer, but soon backslid and began to see visions, like his mother. God the Father and God the Son appeared to him while he was at prayer in a forest, bidding him to ally himself with no church extant, since all were in the meshes of error. Later an angel clothed in supernal glory announced to him that he himself was the chosen vessel of God, that his sins were blotted out, and that the acceptable year of the Lord had come. He was directed to go to a certain hill, where he would find a book of golden plates, together with the instrument to interpret them. Strict injunction was put upon him not to show the plates to any one, nor to use them for self-

ish gain, under penalty of death. Perhaps Smith disregarded this warning later—which would plausibly account for his untimely end—though the Mormons have never made use of the forcible argument that could be based upon such conjecture.

Smith henceforth received revelation after revelation. He found the plates in the spot indicated, but not being sufficiently sanctified he did not remove them. At last, in September, 1827, after three years' growth in holiness, during which he took unto himself a wife in spite of her parents' opposition, which the father wished to voice with a shotgun, the plates passed into Joe's possession. Together with them he found "two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old-fashioned spectacles." These were the Urim and Thummim—the insignia of Old Testament seers—to be employed in translating the golden tome. A curious copper breastplate and a sword also were found in the same spot.

So runs the Mormon version. A suggestive commentary upon it is furnished by the neighbors of the Smith family. One of them, named Peter Ingersoll, a close friend of Joe's, declared under oath that "Smith told him the whole story was a hoax; that he had found no such book; but

that as he had got the d—d fools fixed, he was bound to carry out the fun."

Smith cajoled Martin Harris, a well-to-do farmer, into supporting him while translating the plates. Harris, a gullible fanatic, had been in turn Quaker and Universalist, Baptist and Presbyterian, and pretended to have made a trip to the moon. Now he became the Prophet's secretary. A blanket was hung up in a dark corner to shield the golden plates from profane eyes; behind this improvised curtain, which smacks of the spiritualistic cabinet, sat Smith, translating aloud, while Harris reduced it to writing. What would have been the outcome had Harris been of skeptical nature and torn down the curtain? Probably no Mormon problem would ever have arisen to vex the nation. But perhaps Smith might have met the emergency as he did in a similar contretemps. A couple of cronies, after vainly urging him to show them his wonderful find, were permitted a glimpse of its shape beneath a piece of canvas. One of them, with the words, "Egad, I'll see the critter, live or die!" whisked off the covering, and a large brick was revealed. Smith pretended he had played a joke on them, and some potations from his whiskey-flask again put everybody into good humor.

Smith found another ally, even more

congenial and valuable than Martin Harris, in a stranded schoolmaster, sometime a blacksmith, named Oliver Cowdery. John the Baptist, appearing in a vision, commanded the pair to baptize each other by immersion, at the same time consecrating them "Priests of the Order of Aaron." As soon as the rite had been performed, the Holy Ghost came upon them with the gift of prophecy. By Cowdery's aid—Smith could not then write legibly—the translation of the "Golden Bible" was completed, and the pair began to preach the new gospel. They gained a few converts, but were too well known in the community to meet with any great measure of success. Most of the converts afterward backslid; it is doubtful if any was sincere except Martin Harris, a dupe so simple-minded that he bought Smith's wedding suit for him upon the representation that it was needed for missionary work.

From this time forth the life of Smith runs parallel with the history of the Mormon church. Whether he was the real originator, or only the cat's-paw of Sidney Rigdon, whose connection with the beginnings of the church will be touched upon later, Smith from the first was the acknowledged head and front of the scheme. He possessed in a remarkable degree the qualities essential to success in such an

undertaking—unscrupulous audacity, unblushing impudence, and the nimbus of necromantic power.

That Joseph Smith was a deliberate impostor, as the earlier critics of Mormonism asserted, is not now believed by students of psychology. The dupe of his own imagination, perhaps an epileptic like Paul and Mahomet, he was a victim of the religious crazes that swept the New York lake region. Having received this impulse and acquired this propensity, he found it profitable and easy to expand his first revelations into systematic deception —like those spiritualistic mediums who supplement their "phenomena" with tricks. Beginning as a mystic with hallucinations, Joe Smith developed into a professional high-priest of humbug.

Smith's pretended revelations certainly appeared to be the crudest and most palpable sort of imposture, and it is amazing that they were swallowed by his dupes. Soon after the *Book of Mormon* was printed, and when the printer was clamoring for his money, Smith had a revelation commanding Martin Harris to foot the bill: "I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the *Book of Mormon,* which contains the truth and the word of God. Pay the debt thou has contracted

with the printer." No ambiguity about that oracle! Another revelation commanded the church to build a house for Smith. Still another ordered that he "be provided with food and raiment, and whatsoever things he needeth to accomplish the work wherewith I have commanded him." The irreverent may note the unconventionality of the grammar, which the giant spectacles of the Urim and Thummim seemingly were powerless to overcome.

Despite the defects of his education and his moral delinquencies, Joseph Smith was one of the most remarkable men of his time. His portrait, long in the possession of Brigham Young, shows him to have had features regular and not unintelligent. Physically he was tall and well-proportioned, with light hair, blue eyes, and callow face. He was mild and suave in manner, yet always carried his measures —a born leader of men. He could endure privation and persecution unflinchingly to gain his ends; yet he was fond of ease and luxury, and from his sensuous nature doubtless proceeded the revelation enjoining polygamy upon the church—a feature of its creed that has roused more hostility than all others. In this, also, he resembled Mahomet, who had a special revelation (Sura 33 of the Koran) when he wished to

marry the wife of his adopted son Zaid, a thing abhorrent to the Arabs.

Such was the man who founded a great religion upon flimsy mummeries, and established it despite ridicule and malignant opposition; the man who was tarred and feathered in Ohio, driven from Missouri by the militia, jailed and lynched in Illinois; the man who built three flourishing cities, and had the effrontery to run for the presidency of the United States; the man whose spirit, though like Moses he never trod the promised land, dominates the state of Utah to-day and is one of the mightiest factors in the ultramontane region of the great West.

CHAPTER III

The Book of Mormon

It will be well, before pursuing further the fortunes of the infant church, to pause and look into the supposedly sacred volume from which it sprang. The Mormons derive their name from this book, which they believe to have been written in the fourth century by the Hebrew-American hero-chief Mormon. It has been translated into German, French, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Welsh, Hawaiian, and a dozen other languages, and scattered broadcast over the world by Mormon missionaries. The volume is a queer hash—just such a work as might have been expected of Joseph Smith—a mixture of Holy Writ with blood-and-thunder fiction. Its plot is as follows:

After the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel, God scattered the various tribes of mankind over the face of the earth. Several families, descendants of Jared, came to America, where they increased and multiplied. At first they prospered, living righteously; but later wickedness began to flourish among them, until, about 600 B. C., they

were punished for their transgressions by total annihilation. Their history was written and the record hidden away by their great prophet Ether. Let not the irreverent therefore deem it "light as air," nor suggest its affinity to laughing gas.

Now about this time, while Zedekiah sat on the throne of Judah, Lehi, a holy man of the tribe of Joseph, divinely warned of Jerusalem's impending destruction, was by God's hand led to America. Lehi landed on the coast of Chile, and his descendants, spreading northward, repeopled the land, and found records of the extinct Jaredites. Both of the races now dwelling on the continent, the sons of Nephi and the sons of Laman, waxed prosperous and mighty like their predecessors. But the Lamanites lapsed into barbarism, while the Nephites, specially favored by the Lord, attained high civilization. They lived according to the law of Moses, which they had brought across the sea, and were ruled by judges, kings, and prophets, even as Israel. Visions and angels' visits were vouchsafed to their patriarchs and holy men, and in the fullness of time, after his death on the cross and his ascension, Christ came down to visit America and organized the church there as he had in Judea.

Three or four centuries after Christ, the Nephites, lapsing into sin, were delivered into the hand of the savage Lamanites, progenitors of the American Indians. The great Nephite hero-prophet Mormon had been commanded to inscribe the records of his nation upon golden tables, which he committed to his son Moroni, who hid them in the hill Cumorah when the Lamanites destroyed his people, slaying 230,000 in a great battle. The Urim and Thummim were put with the tables, so that the finder might be able to interpret the writings. In due time these plates were discovered by Joseph Smith.

Such is the story of the *Book of Mormon*. The plates of fine gold which Smith professed to have found, guided by an angel, have aroused much incredulous criticism. They were not shown to any one until two years after Smith first announced their discovery. Even then they were displayed only to eleven persons; the remainder of the world was not holy enough to be permitted a glance at these writings in "Reformed Egyptian," a language hitherto unknown to philology. To make matters worse, the book with the other paraphernalia was returned to the angel after Smith had done with them, which of course disposes of any hope that future generations of linguists may un-

ravel its cabalistic runes into a grammar and a lexicon.

The breastplate, which only Smith's mother ever saw, and a sword, never shown to any one—what prizes these for a museum! It seems to have been the original intention to exhibit the plates, after the translation was completed, charging twenty-five cents admission; but this plan was never carried into execution. Either the plates were mythical, or exposure was feared. But what an impetus it would have given the faith if the original plates could have been displayed in the sanctuary of its several Zions, or could have been sent forth to confound the learning of the schools! Or if the volume, surely 24 carats fine, had been melted down to pay for printing the first edition of the "translation," on the title-page of which, it may be interesting to remember, Smith proclaimed himself the "author and proprietor." The plates were said to be eight inches long and seven in width, about the thickness of tin; three gold rings fastened these plates together into a volume six inches thick and weighing about sixty pounds. The United States mint would have returned coin enough to save Martin Harris from mortgaging his farm, with something over to pay the debts the

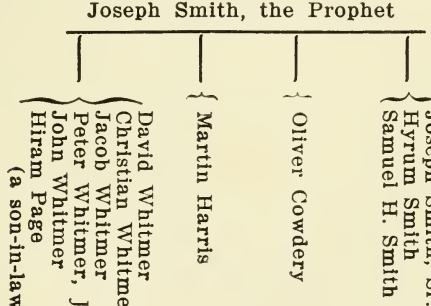
Smiths left behind them when they migrated from Palmyra to Kirtland, Ohio.

The eleven persons whose testimony that they saw the original plates is prefixed to the later editions of the *Book of Mormon* can hardly be called disinterested witnesses. The first three are Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. Cowdery and Harris were Smith's confederates in the labor of translation; Harris was also financially interested to a considerable sum; while David Whitmer belonged to a family "noted for credulity and a belief in witches," who offered Smith an asylum in their home soon after the story of the Golden Bible was bruited about. Besides, the testimony of these three witnesses contains so many things of which they can not have been sure, that we may well doubt their reliability as to those points upon which they should have been sure. Harris, when questioned closely, used to explain that he had seen the plates "with his spiritual eye," and we may well believe that he saw them through Smith's spiritual spectacles, for it seems almost certain that the whole of the testimony was drawn up by Smith himself.

Cowdery and Whitmer were subsequently expelled from the church — called "murderers at heart" by Smith, and

"counterfeiters, thieves, liars, blacklegs of the deepest dye," by Sidney Rigdon. Harris also was expelled, having mutinied at the shabby treatment Smith accorded him after his money was gone, but he never recanted his belief in Mormonism.

Of the eight other witnesses, five were relatives of Whitmer's and the remaining three were Smith's father and two brothers. So it appears that this testimony, taken at its full value, is pretty much a family affair. A simple diagram will make this plain:



Martin Harris was a practical man as well as a man of faith, and hoped to reap a golden reward on earth as well as occupy a front pew in the New Jerusalem. Impelled by this practical vein in his character, and probably instigated by his

Quaker wife, who treated the whole matter as "craziness," he insisted upon being given a copy of the writing, which he took to New York and showed to various scholars, asking their opinion. The Mormons assert that the famous Prof. Charles Anthon declared the characters to be Egyptian, Chaldean, Assyrian, and Arabic. Anthon in a letter denied having given any such ridiculous opinion, but suspected that an attempt was being made to victimize Harris, and accordingly warned him. But Harris, it is supposed, was only confirmed in his faith by any warning. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," was his favorite axiom.

Harris's wife burned a part of the manuscript secretly, thinking to put an end to the scheme. This brought about a coolness between Harris and Smith, the Prophet suspecting the farmer of having connived at the loss of the precious pages. Smith had a convenient revelation ordering him not to retranslate the lost portion, lest, if the stolen copy should be found and differed from the new version, skeptics might scoff at God's word.

Although Harris declared that "Brother Joseph drank too much liquor while translating the *Book of Mormon,*" the translation was finally completed. The

work was printed and given to the world in 1830, Harris mortgaging his farm for $3,000 to make this possible. It was a book of 588 octavo pages, and was to be sold at the specially revealed price of $1.25. Harris was to have the exclusive selling rights; but he proved a failure as a colporteur, and the books were finally sold, traded, or disposed of in any way that would redound to the greater affluence and comfort of the Smith family.

The meaning of the word "Mormon," which is Greek for "bugaboo," has been explained by Smith with a happier etymology. "Mon" in Egyptian means "good," and "mor" is a contraction of "more;" hence "Mormon" means "more good" or "better." Such hybrid derivations being contrary to the best usage, it might be suggested that "mon" be treated as a contraction of "money," and that the full meaning is "more money."

Part of the "Golden Bible" was sealed, so that it could neither be opened nor read. The writing was in a "small unknown character;" the facsimiles of it shown rather resemble the hieroglyphics executed by a very small boy who has surreptitiously secured his father's pen. There are Arabic numerals, dots and dashes, circles and squares, Roman letters at all angles and upside down, with queer curly-

cues that look like a clumsy forgery of a laundry-check.

The original mss. of the new Bible had no marks of punctuation and no capital letters, nor were there any paragraphs. The Urim and Thummim did not pay any attention to typographical details. After handling a few pages of the "copy," the printer who got out the first edition had found that his reputation would be forever lost if he printed the book "as it was written." Finally, after much expostulation, Smith modified the commandment of the Lord forbidding any changes, and gave the printer limited liberty as to nonessentials. Thus it appears that the new-fledged Prophet was already learned in the wisdom of the Higher Critics. Notwithstanding the printer's corrections, the first edition of the "inspired" volume was full of errors in spelling and grammar, capitalizing and punctuation—to say nothing of anachronisms, gross historical blunders, glaring absurdities, and stilted imitations of scriptural phraseology—six hundred pages of dull drivel.

Those hero-prophets of prehistoric America were wondrously endowed, as they could quote from *Hamlet* and the King James Bible a thousand years before Shakespeare and King James were born—plain proof of inspiration! But

the work adds nothing to human knowledge except the names of two animals, "cureloms and cumoms," hitherto unknown to Zoology. Along with Leviathan and Behemoth, these creatures would prove drawing-cards for any menagerie. Some inspired artist should paint these beasts and resolve all doubts about them. Has the curelom wings or a prehensile tail? Is the cumom carnivorous or does it feed upon nuts?

But what of the true origin of this sacred book? One widely accepted theory identifies it with an archeological romance, *The Manuscript Found,* written by the Rev. Solomon Spaulding about 1809. Spaulding believed the American continent to have been colonized by the ancient Israelites, and that the Indians are their descendants. Upon this theory—which belongs in the same category as Shakespeare-Bacon ciphers and Great Pyramid inheritances—the good dominie based a fabulous history of the mound-builders. He gave the manuscript to a Pittsburgh bookseller named Patterson. Spaulding died before an agreement as to terms of publication could be reached, and the manuscript remained in Patterson's possession.

Now another character appears upon the stage of this religious melodrama. It

is Sidney Rigdon, who afterward became the great apostle of Mormonism. Rigdon was a sort of theological free lance—an eloquent speaker and a man of much executive ability, but given to erratic notions. He drifted from the Baptist fold into the Disciple, and here, becoming disgruntled at real or fancied slights put upon him by Alexander Campbell, he probably conceived the idea of starting a religion of his own. It is known that he worked at the printer's case in his younger days, and it seems that he was in Patterson's employ or loafed about the place, and it is not unlikely that in some way or other he got hold of the Spaulding manuscript.

Learning through the papers of Smith's necromantic and clairvoyant performances, and of his "magic peek-stone," Rigdon saw in him a perhaps valuable ally. Perhaps they met on one of Rigdon's tours as a Campbellite evangelist; perhaps the tin-peddling theologian, Parley Pratt, who will play a great role in the future of the new religion, was the go-between. An understanding was reached in some way, and the result was that Spaulding's tale, greatly padded and altered to suit the purposes of the schemers, in due time made its appearance as the *Book of Mormon.*

Rigdon was often away from home for weeks while the translation was going on, and a "mysterious stranger" made frequent visits to the Smith homestead during the same time. All this, with the additional fact that Rigdon in Ohio spoke of the new revelation before it was made public, forms a fairly complete chain of circumstantial evidence. A number of persons, including the widow, brother, business partner, and neighbors of Spaulding, also identified his romance as the groundwork of the *Book of Mormon*—the same characters, the same plot, the same peculiar diction and style. Spaulding's original manuscript was reported to have been found at Honolulu in 1885, and this ms. is at present in the library of Oberlin College, but it is generally believed to be a forgery.

Such, according to the most plausible theory, was the genesis of that sacred volume, holding which in one hand and the Bible in the other, and suddenly clapping them together— an effective oratorical trick—Sidney Rigdon in his Mormon sermons declared that the two books were each incomplete without the other.

The Spaulding-Rigdon theory of the *Book of Mormon* may be wrong—indeed, it is almost superfluous. The book contains nothing which Joseph Smith might

not have evolved. It is a religious dime-novel written in the style of *Kings* and *Chronicles,* interminable, prosaic, platitudinous, ungrammatical. It will never be attacked by any Higher Criticism: it is beneath all criticism. Yet it is believed implicitly by hundreds of thousands. Very true are the words of the great historian Edward Gibbon: "The practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude that, if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision.*** So urgent on the vulgar is the necessity of believing, that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition." Very true —and yet how tragical!

CHAPTER IV

The Birth of a New Religion

It was a time of spiritual unrest. Mushroom sects sprang up over night; epidemic delusions swept across the land, like the flagellant and dancing manias of the Middle Ages. The appearance of a comet would throw whole communities into a frenzy of preparation for the day of wrath. To this period belong the vagaries of the Millerites, and the meteoric career of Dylks, the Leatherwood Messiah; this period also marked the rise of the Disciples, the Winebrennerians, the Free-Will Baptists. Religious excitement everywhere blazed up in remarkable revivals, which were often attended by peculiar physical and psychical phenomena —shouting, grimacing, writhing, as in convulsions. The "Barkers" would gather around a tree, snarling and yapping like dogs, which they called "treeing the devil;" camp-meetings would be convulsed with "holy laughter" that could be heard a long distance off for hours and days. It was an age of religious epidemics.

The cause of this unsettled state of the popular mind, and of the consequent ready

responsiveness to religious freaks and frauds, is not hard to find. The labors and privations of pioneer life were rapidly being superseded by the comfort and security of established communities, while education had not yet clarified the seething brains. In the fallow soil of leisure and naive ignorance Mormonism quickly took root, like a score of other religious crazes of the day, which had not its peculiar elements of vitality and so perished.

The church was definitely organized at Fayette, New York, in 1830, on April sixth. Why not five days sooner, may be asked, to conserve the eternal fitness of things? The six original members were Joseph Smith, senior, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith, junior, Samuel Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and Joseph Knight. At first they called themselves the "Church of Christ," soon, however, they styled it the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints"—now usually abridged to "Latter-Day Saints."

The first conference of the new-fledged church was held the same year, in the beginning of June, with thirty members present. Missionaries were sent out, and an evangelistic campaign inaugurated. Elder Oliver Cowdery preached the first sermon; Parley Pratt, already mentioned, whose time was divided between peddling tin-

ware and proclaiming the gospel, also entered the apostolate; Martin Harris harangued crowds at street corners and in taverns. Sidney Rigdon soon threw off his mask, and embraced the new faith. He had been gradually preparing his congregation at Kirtland, Ohio, for the change; now, at the start, he made a melodramatic show of opposition, to render his conversion all the more impressive. He went through a vehement public debate with Pratt, yielding inch by inch, and at last surrendered, professing to have received the Spirit's witness to the truth of the new revelation. The trump of the latter-day gospel was sounded with might and main; conversions came thick and fast—except around Palmyra, where the Prophet and his acolytes were too well known.

Of course, the "world" now began to afflict the Saints. Joseph was arrested, charges of fraud being brought against him. Though acquitted by the district court, he deemed it prudent to shake the dust of the community from his feet, especially as threats and attempts of violence were several times made. In 1831 he and his followers removed to Kirtland, where Rigdon already had done effective missionary work.

There the church grew, despite vehement opposition. The ignorant and super-

stitious were frightened into the fold by prophecies such as one by Martin Harris, that within fifteen years Christ would appear and everybody who had not accepted Mormonism would be damned. Others were attracted by the fascination which the strange and marvelous ever exercises over many minds; not a few were influenced by motives of cupidity and a desire for place and power. Such converts were not susceptible to counteractives like the scholarly Alexander Campbell's exposé of the *Book of Mormon.* Who knows if in centuries to come Campbell's writings may not be lost like those of Celsus, who criticised early Christianity on the ground that "weavers, tailors, fullers, and the most illiterate and rustic fellows" were preaching this gospel and exalting the peculiar glory of ignorance? It would be no greater marvel than the success of the illiterate and rustic fellows preaching Mormonism among people of their own stamp. Still, it would be misleading to assume that all the Mormon converts of that day, or of more recent time, were ignorant and superstitious. Among them were men of piety and learning; many were descended from the stern old Puritan stock of New England. Such was Lorenzo Snow—whose sister Eliza later became one of Smith's wives—an accom-

plished Hebrew scholar and a graduate of Presbyterian Oberlin; such was Brigham Young, the Joshua of Mormonism, whose grandfather was a New England Methodist, and whose father fought in the Revolutionary war. Lorin Farr, the first mayor of Ogden, came of old New Hampshire stock; Anson Call's grandfather fought at Bunker Hill and under Washington; Abram Hatch also boasted of a Revolutionary ancestry; Franklin D. Richards was a native of Massachusetts; Francis M. Lyman's grandfather was a cousin of Lyman Beecher—Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe were his second cousins. The list might be extended greatly; but these names will suffice to show that not merely the rabble was captivated by the strange and novel doctrine.

A splendid temple was built at Kirtland, representing a value of forty thousand dollars. Apostles were sent forth to convert the Indian tribes, the "Lamanites," to whom Smith professed to be specially sent. A new version of the Bible was also begun with the aid of the Urim and Thummim. Ere long, however, it became evident to Smith that his plans could not be carried out to the full in the more settled states. In obedience to a revelation —he now had revelations as regularly as

his meals—another colony was founded in Missouri, where the foundations of "the glorious city of the New Jerusalem" were laid. The settlement prospered, for the Mormons spread its fame far and wide with an energy and eloquence that a town-boomer of later days might have envied. "The streets would be paved with gold. The ten lost tribes of Israel had been discovered in the vicinity of the North Pole, where they had for ages been secluded by immense barriers of ice, and had become vastly rich; the ice in a few years was to be melted away, when these tribes, with Saint John at their head, would be seen making their appearance in the new city, loaded with immense quantities of gold and silver."

Communism, with its alluring dream of fraternity and its promise of assured subsistence, was another factor that led many to follow the apostles of Mormonism. It was the time when the Shakers and the Owenites. the Brook Farmers and the Harmonists, formed their communities, most of them upon a religious basis. These doctrinaires could point to the example of the early Christians, who had all things in common—and in a time of economic stress and emotional fervor such teachings found many eager listeners to accept them. As the Mormons increased

their worldly goods, however, their early communistic notions died out, leaving a very effective tithing system as their survival in Mormon polity.

Upon the return from the first reconnoitering expedition into Missouri, attended as it was by such disagreeable experiences as a ducking in the river and the necessity of pawning their trunks to get home, Smith and Rigdon set to work to secure funds for building the new Zion. They opened a general store at Hiram near Kirtland, but were tarred and feathered by a mob. They started a "wildcat" bank at Kirtland, and flooded the region with Mormon money. Here the trust principle was first enunciated, a "divine revelation" declaring that this bank "would swallow up all other banks." They also started a paper, *The Evening and Morning Star,* which soon ceased to twinkle.

As the household of the faithful increased, Smith and his adjutants saw the necessity of adopting some fixed church polity. So they compiled the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants,* and organized the "Council" of twelve high-priests and three presidents. Then a quorum of "Twelve Apostles" was constituted. The picturesque and poetic spirit pervading the church at that early day, which must

have thrown a glamour over all its claims in the eyes of simple-minded and pious folk, spread its wings in the sobriquets bestowed upon those "apostles." Brigham Young was the Lion of the Lord; Parley Pratt, the Archer of Paradise; Orson Hyde, the Olive-Branch of Israel; Willard Richards, the Keeper of the Rolls; John Taylor, the Champion of Right; William Smith, the Patriarchal Jacob's Staff; Wilford Woodruff, the Banner of the Gospel; George A. Smith, the Entablature of Truth; Orson Pratt, the Gauge of Philosophy; John E. Page, the Sun-Dial; Lyman Wright, the Wild Ram of the Mountains.

The collapse of the Kirtland community came with the financial panic of 1837. The bank that was to swallow all other banks had flooded the Western Reserve with worthless scrip. An action for unlawful banking was brought against Rigdon and Smith; other troubles began to multiply. The temple had already been mortgaged—not by the church, but by Smith, Rigdon, *et al.* When the bank closed its doors, Mormonism pulled up stakes, and the hegira to the Missouri Zion began, culminating in the Prophet's inglorious midnight flight, which he justified by the saying of Jesus: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another."

Meanwhile the Missouri colony, "where Christ would shortly reign in person," had grown to about 1,500 souls and was progressing finely; but some practices of the Saints brought upon them the odium of their neighbors. Resolutions were passed ordering all Mormons to leave the state, forbidding any others to enter it, and closing with this delicious morsel of irony: "That those who fail to comply with these requisitions, be referred to those of their brethren who have the gifts of divination and of unknown tongues, to inform them of the lot that awaits them." Joseph, appealed to as Prophet, preached resistance and predicted victory; so a Mormon army, two hundred and five men strong, had set out from Kirtland to smite the Gentiles. Their banner was milky white, with the word "Peace" printed upon it in blood-red characters. But when they arrived in Missouri, and saw the Gentile host, instead of "possessing the land" they possessed themselves in patience, and decided to take the inscription of the banner literally as their motto.

When Smith arrived in Missouri, Far West was the nucleus of the Mormon colony there. A new temple was projected, "upon the very spot where the Garden of Eden had once been." But trouble was brewing. Cowdery and Harris were ex-

communicated; Thomas B. Marsh, the president of the Apostles, apostatized and charged his late brethren with many misdeeds, among them counterfeiting, cattle-thieving, immoral practices, and treason against the state. The people of Missouri rose; civil war was rife; the militia had to be called out. The end of the trouble was that the Mormons again had to cross the Father of Waters. As a Mormon hymn phrases it—a genuine Mormon hymn, for all its Gilbertian comic-opera flavor—

"Missouri,
Like a whirlwind in its fury,
And without a judge or jury,
Drove the Saints and spilled their blood."

CHAPTER V

Nauvoo the Beautiful

In the spring of 1839 the Mormons, now more sinned against than sinning, crossed over into Illinois, and there, about fifty miles above Quincy, on a rolling plain in a curve of the majestic stream, founded Nauvoo the Beautiful. Both the name of the new city and its significance were revealed to Smith, who ruled over it as prophet, priest, and king. Soon the desert blossomed like the rose, and the erection of another pretentious temple was begun, a limestone of marmorean beauty and durability being used in the building. From near and far the faithful flocked to the new settlement; many converts were attracted through sympathy aroused by the Missouri persecutions; and ere long Nauvoo had a population of ten thousand souls. The city was well governed. Saloons and drunkenness were unknown. The Mormon virtues of industry and thrift were abundantly in evidence. The idle were "whittled" out of town—surrounded by a committee of citizens, who whittled their sticks at them until they left—a curious Yankee mode of ostracism!

As the number of Mormons grew, Smith began to dabble in politics. He controlled the vote of Nauvoo and the county almost absolutely; in one election only six votes were cast in opposition to his dictum. This power he used to obtain for Nauvoo a charter giving the church almost unlimited rights and privileges. The Prophet was elected Mayor. The Nauvoo Legion was formed, a fine body of soldiery which eventually grew to four thousand men—a Mormon army in the guise of state militia, with General Smith as commander-in-chief. The Nauvoo University was instituted next. A fine hotel was built, in obedience to a special revelation, in which "my servant Joseph" was remembered as always, and a suite of rooms ordered to be set apart for him and his forever. Imagine a revelation from heaven decreeing the building of a hotel, and giving minute architectural details! Mormon apologists, of course, point to the tabernacle as a precedent—for Mormon apologists are quite resourceful.

The year 1844 saw Mormonism strongly intrenched in Illinois, with Smith at the zenith of his glory and power. He occupied a place and wielded an influence far beyond anything his own high-fantastic imagination had ever painted. His wealth was estimated at a million dollars;

he was Pontifex Maximus of a great and growing church, absolute ruler over temporal and spiritual things; hundreds of missionaries proclaimed his wisdom and holiness in every quarter of the globe. By his enemies he was envied and feared; by the politicians of both great parties coddled and courted. No wonder his vaulting ambition o'erleaped itself!

Clouds began to gather on the horizon. A number of his henchmen, notably John C. Bennett, were alienated, and went forth breathing calumnies against the church, calling Nauvoo a modern Sodom and Smith a moral leper. Some of their charges may have been too well founded, for it is almost certain that the revelation commanding polygamy had now been delivered, and that "spiritual wifehood" was flourishing. At the last dress parade of the Nauvoo Legion, ten of Smith's "celestial wives" took part, mounted on milk-white chargers and arrayed in full uniform. Such things could not but rouse bad blood. With all respect due to Mormon virtues, the people of Illinois were not ready, any more than those of Missouri, to brook Mormon vices.

It seems that among the failings of the early Saints was a fondness for their neighbors' goods. Elders had found revelation a very convenient path to prosper-

ity; a believer in possession of a gold watch or a suit of clothes could ofttimes be persuaded to turn them over in obedience to divine injunction, but sometimes complained because the revelations never told the holy men to share their gold watches or new suits with any one else. Still more objectionable was the literal acceptance of the words: "Behold, it is not said at any time that the Lord should not take when he pleased, and pay as seemeth him good; wherefore as ye are agents, and ye are on the Lord's errand," etc.—a revelation given in Missouri in 1831 to mitigate the rigors of the Eighth Commandment.

"Milking the Gentiles"—a cant Mormon phrase of obvious meaning—was practiced till the Gentiles were incensed to fury. But Mormons controlled the courts round about Nauvoo, and could not be convicted of any crime, however strong the evidence.

To fan opposition into active hate needed only some such incident as occurred in 1843. An attempt was made upon the life of Gov. L. W. Boggs, of Missouri; a Mormon was the would-be assassin, and Smith was charged with having instigated the deed. A requisition was issued for the Prophet and his alleged tool, but a writ of *habeas corpus* defeated this move. The

case was finally tried in the Nauvoo court, under the city's liberal and comprehensive charter, and the two prisoners were triumphantly acquitted.

The ill-feeling was intensified when Smith announced himself as a candidate for the Presidency in 1844—an act that brought ridicule upon him and the church. His address to the voters was a ludicrous hodge-podge of politics and religion; from which, however, he may be regarded as the father of expansion, as he advocated the annexation of both Canada and Mexico.

With each day the arrogance of the Mormons and the rage of their enemies increased. An anti-Mormon paper was started right in Nauvoo, but a decree of the city council confiscated and destroyed the printing outfit. Attempts to arrest Smith came to naught, as he stood on the impregnable rock of the Nauvoo charter. At last, when a popular uprising against the city was threatened, Smith surrendered, and was lodged in the jail at Carthage. On June 27, 1844, a fanatical mob attacked the prison. Unlike Jesus of Nazareth, who rebuked Peter for using his sword, the Mormon Prophet had two six-shooters, and brought down four of his assailants. After a hot battle, both Joseph and his brother Hyrum were shot and killed—the former as he leaped from the

window attempting to escape. "O Lord, my God!" were his last words.

Thus the long comedy closed with a dark and tragic denouement. The "irrepressible conflict" had begun. The Saints saw the futility of resistance, but chose to exile themselves rather than yield. The temple, which was to have cost a million dollars, was hurriedly completed, because Smith had prophesied it should be; but the day after its dedication it was dismantled and the exodus began. The charter of Nauvoo was revoked by the legislature; the city was besieged and bombarded by a mob; the remnant of the Prophet's followers was driven forth. At Council Bluffs, Iowa, they caught up with the advance-guard, and plodded on toward the setting sun.

Beyond the borders of civilization, the exiles hoped to build an empire of their own, untrammeled by conventional morality and the envy of the orthodox denominations. They would claim the West "for their inheritance." Smith's tragic end really gave Mormonism a greater impetus than anything else could have done. Persecution always furthers the cause it attacks; it kindles sympathy in fair-minded men, stubborn resistance in the martyrs and their followers.

CHAPTER VI

To the Promised Land

The blood of the Smiths, in the soil of Utah, then a part of Mexico, became the prolific seed of a mighty church.

Upper California, as Utah was then called, had already been looked toward as an ultimate haven in Smith's day. The Saints, overwhelmed with grief at their Prophet's martyrdom, were ready to depart from the land of oppression. But a city can not be moved in a day. The people of Illinois disgraced themselves as had those of Missouri, and the hapless remnant of the Mormons was driven forth in the middle of winter, their homes pillaged and burned, by the savage bigotry of their Gentile neighbors.

A firm hand seized the reins that fell from Joseph Smith's lifeless grasp. Brigham Young showed that he had justly been styled "the Lion of the Lord." This uncouth man, who did not know how to spell his own name, and began it with a small "y," had in him the qualities that make great leaders—singleness of purpose, a clear head, and a resolute will. He had the aggressive energy of Luther, the

resourceful fervor of Loyola. He was the man for the hour; no other could have saved Mormonism from disintegration in the crisis that followed its leader's fall.

Much as he has been maligned, Brigham was undoubtedly sincere. He accepted the Mormon revelation at par; while an autocratic spirit, rising from his exuberant vitality, led him to turn all things to his own aggrandizement. Not versed in the subtleties of ethical dialectics, but holding that might makes right, his crude conscience justified any means by the end in view. With ease he wrested the scepter of Mormondom from Sidney Rigdon, who believed himself entitled to the succession. Sidney was excommunicated, and delivered unto Satan for a thousand years. Smith's erratic rule was succeeded by a wise, far-seeing, and eminently practical policy, administered with despotic inflexibility, extending alike to things spiritual and things temporal. "Brickham young" became Pope and Czar in one person.

With wonderful energy and generalship, Brigham led the Saints' hegira to the region beyond the Rockies. Fanatical faith buoyed up the spirits of the exiles, steeling them for the wearisome journey. Hardships were many, but on the far horizon gleamed the star of hope. They plodded across the trackless prairie—a seem-

ingly interminable caravan. There were twelve to fifteen thousand men, women and children; over three thousand ox-carts and wagons; thirty thousand head of cattle, horses and mules in great number, uncounted droves of sheep. For nigh two years this pilgrimage through the wilderness continued; the jolting of the wagons being used to churn the milk. The church had no place of fixed abode; still the Saints, shaken with ague and blistered with fevers, had ever before their eyes the vision of the new city. As they journeyed on they received from the savage Indians of the wilds a welcome that stood in glaring contrast with the inhuman treatment accorded them by the Christian communities they had left behind. "We have both suffered," said a Pottawattomie chief; "we must help each other, and the Great Spirit will help us both."

A pioneer band of the bravest and best men was sent ahead to spy out the land and prepare the way. The romance of Mormonism was not yet at an end. Nothing in Greek myth is more beautiful than this forlorn hope scattering seeds of the sunflower along the route, so that the mighty host that followed was shown the way by patches of golden bloom. On the twenty-second day of July, 1847, they entered the valley where they founded the

"City of the Great Salt Lake." And now, if romance had not fled, there also was still in their midst the saving grace of humor, which had made the history of Mormonism seem almost a huge joke from the first. In an exhortation to the Saints, the Apostles commanded them to "bring their gold, their silver, their copper, their zinc, their tin, and brass, and iron, and choice steel, and ivory, and precious stones," to adorn the new Zion. So the Saints came, obedient to the command, and fell to work pitching rude shelters, splitting logs, hoeing corn, and planting potatoes.

Then the miracle of the crickets occurred, convincing the exiles that the Lord had been their guide. Clouds of fierce devouring insects descended upon the young crops. And it came to pass that white gulls fell upon the crickets and devoured them. This incident has grown into an elaborate myth, though naturalists decline to see anything supernatural in it. Those gulls were always numerous about the Great Salt Lake; the crops attracted the crickets, and the crickets attracted the birds. Naturalists are always coming along with such easy explanations to spoil perfectly good miracles. The real miracle, however, was the perseverance of the Saints.

Soon the "Great American Desert" put

on robes of fragrance. At first grain was scarce, so that thistle-tops were eaten, soup-stock was made by boiling the hide roofs of houses, and the beef obtainable was so tough that they had to grease the saws to cut it, yet faith and toil won the victory. In a few years abundance prevailed, leaving leisure for the amenities of life. A great university was projected in 1850; a new alphabet of thirty-two letters was invented; a library was founded, and well stocked with books from the East; and a year later even a dramatic association had been formed, giving creditable stage entertainments. In 1853 the corner-stone of another new temple was laid, amid the blare of brass bands and the rodomontade of the Apostles.

The community throve marvelously. That they were governed wisely and well is proved by the manner in which Brigham Young stamped out the gold fever in 1849, when many wanted to migrate to the California Ophir. "If we were to go and dig up chunks of gold," argued Young, "or find it in our valley, it would ruin us." Sound statecraft—losing some of its point and force by the declaration that "the true use of gold is for paving streets and covering houses."

Fresh troubles were brewing. The state of Deseret was organized—which

means the land of the honey-bee, according to the *Book of Mormon*. The Mexican war had resulted in the cession of California and New Mexico to the Union. Nevada and Utah then formed part of California, so that the Mormons again had come under the jurisdiction of the United States. A territorial form of government was extended over the "State of Deseret," and Brigham Young was appointed governor. Ere long there moved into the thriving community Gentiles, who would not accept as final the judgments of Mormon courts, presided over by Mormon bishops. Perhaps they were justified in this attitude, for Brigham Young himself, in the patriarchal role of supreme judge, once threatened to dismiss the whole episcopal bench, with the words: "You are not fit to decide a case between two old women, let alone two men."

The troubles were aggravated when polygamy was openly promulgated as a plank of the church platform. It was also charged that Brigham had converted to his own use moneys appropriated by Congress for government buildings. Other usurpations and abuses of various kinds added fuel to the flame. To balance the account, many of the judges and officials sent to the territory by the government at Washington were denounced by the Mor-

mons as incompetent and unscrupulous adventurers, to whom these appointments had fallen as crumbs from the table of political patronage. As if the fat graft were only for the sleek saint! Finally the representatives of the nation were driven out of the state by the exasperated Mormons, and Brigham solemnly declared that if others like them were sent, they would be slain.

Now an army was sent to Utah to put down the incipient insurrection. A dramatic climax followed. Brigham proclaimed martial law, assumed the role of dictator, and the Mormon militia, the reorganized Nauvoo Legion, was mobilized to meet the troops expected to re-establish the Federal supremacy.

CHAPTER VII

Mormon Beliefs and Practices

While the hosts of the "chosen people" are preparing to repel the "mercenary rabble" sent against them by President Buchanan, let us examine the peculiar system of government—almost a theocracy—which held that people together, and still obtains among them to-day, modified along some lines, elaborated along others, but essentially the same. Also let us consider those virtues that have made them great, those peculiarities that have brought hate and obloquy upon them—the same to-day as at the outbreak of the Mormon War.

The church polity of Mormonism is complex and complete. Its hierarchy includes dignitaries enough almost to exhaust the English tongue's store of ecclesiastical titles. There are two orders of priesthood, the Melchisedec and the Aaronic; there are presidencies, councils, quorums, seventies, and stakes; there are prophets, patriarchs, apostles, bishops, elders, deacons, teachers, *ad infinitum.* About a fifth of the Mormon men hold some churchly office. Their organization is perfect. Every block of buildings has its

teacher, who is charged not only with keeping ablaze the religious faith of those under him, but is also their mentor in secular affairs—in business, in politics, in domestic life. He is father confessor and father inquisitor in one, and is amenable only to the ward bishop to whom he reports. The ward bishops are under a presiding bishop for the whole town. He in turn derives his authority from the "First Presidency," consisting of the Prophet and two Counselors, who direct the affairs of the entire church.

This network of surveillance and superintendence centering in the supreme head of the church, this concatenation of power radiating from the spirit of absolute and unquestioning obedience that permeates the whole body, moves in secular affairs upon principles so empiric and crude that statesmen would stand aghast at the results. Here are Poor Richard's maxims welded into a system of political economy. "Laws," said Brigham Young, "should be simple and plain, easy to be comprehended by the most unlearned, void of ambiguity, and few in number." There is the basis of Mormon legislation. "Pay your tithes and mind your own business," was and is the fundamental rule of conduct. "Produce what you consume," is another bit of homely counsel for plain

people; "buy no article from the stores that you can do without; permit no vitiated taste to lead you into indulgence of expensive luxuries." And though revelation had exempted Joseph Smith from toil, the church pronounced labor to be honorable, and a duty no less than prayer or temple service. Brigham Young worked at the carpenter's bench in his own mill. Charity was another supreme virtue, and was displayed most commendably in the treatment of the broken-down Argonauts of '49, who were first fleeced on their way to the coast.

Remarkable also was the attitude of the church upon the questions of slavery, temperance, and woman suffrage. The abolitionist utterances of some Mormon leaders had much to do with the rancor aroused in Missouri. Among the hundred and forty-three pioneers who entered Utah were several negro freemen. And while Brigham held slavery to be a divine institution, he also believed that the time would come when "the seed of Cain should be redeemed"—according to tradition the negroes were the descendants of Cain, and their black skin the mark set upon him by God. The Mormon settlers of Utah bought Indian slave children, but only to prevent their being killed by their captors.

The equal rights of woman were always

recognized; the ballot belonged to male and female alike. The territory of Utah affords probably "the first instance in the United States where woman suffrage was permitted"—a privilege later withdrawn before statehood could be obtained. Indeed, the Mormons may also claim to have originated the "new woman," as King Strang, who ruled an island colony in Lake Michigan, published an ukase which made "bloomers" obligatory, provoking a rebellion that ended in his downfall—not the first sovereign to trip over woman's skirts.

Temperance and sobriety were inculcated from the start. At Far West and Nauvoo a rigorous prohibition law was promulgated—with a rather incongruous amendment reserving to Joseph Smith the sole privilege of selling liquor. And among the earliest enactments at Salt Lake City was one forbidding the sale or use of ardent spirits. In the heart of winter, and amid the horrors of the enforced hegira, it had been resolved that "no corn should be made into whiskey, and that if any man was preparing to distill corn into whiskey, or alcohol, the corn should be taken and given to the poor."

These homely virtues and enlightened principles of public policy would have made any people great; but in Mormonism they were linked with beliefs inherent-

ly so absurd and practices so unconventional that civilization laughed at the former and strove by every shift of diplomacy or force to uproot the other. As a fair sample of the ludicrous may be instanced the new astronomy which was to be taught in the Deseret University, and was to overturn the orthodox theories of science; putting the sun, the great orb Kolob, into the center of the universe, letting it rotate once in a thousand years and all the host of heaven revolve around it, while the law of gravitation was entirely abolished. For was it not so written in the *Book of Abraham?*

Mormon theology is of a truth fearfully and wonderfully made. It is founded upon the *Book of Mormon,* modified by innumerable later revelations vouchsafed unto Smith, Rigdon, and Young. According to its prime tenets there is one chief God, Jehovah, who has three persons; this supreme God has a wife, a female deity; from them has sprung a whole pantheon of minor gods and goddesses, besides angels and the human race.

God the Father, according to Joe Smith, "has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." According to Brigham Young, "God was Adam, and Eve was one of his wives." Mormon apologists do not defend this doctrine, but it was certainly

promulgated by Young in a sermon preached April 9, 1852, and is just as authentic as any other revelation or tenet of Smith and his successors. According to later theologians, the supreme God has indeed the form of a man, but his body is composed of spiritual matter — that is, matter of extreme fineness. He resides in the center of the universe, near the great star Kolob, each millennial rotation of which marks a divine day. Jesus was literally the son of God, but differs from him only in age and authority—seniority presides. The Holy Spirit is matter in its most rarified form, a subtle fluid, like electricity, filling all space.

Heaven is partitioned into three abodes —the telestial and the terrestrial, for those who have neither accepted nor rejected the gospel; and the celestial, for those who believe and have been baptized. The manner of baptism is by immersion, infant baptism being rejected. Curious in this connection is the doctrine of "baptism for the dead," according to which any one, believing a deceased relative to be in torment, can go and be baptized as his proxy, so securing his admission to the realms of bliss. These, the celestial heaven, would ultimately be established upon earth, when the great white throne would stand in Jackson county, Missouri.

All who accept Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the Lord will there reign with Christ for a thousand years; apostates, who are guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, will be bound, and cast into the pit with Satan and his angels. Apropos of which it may be remarked that the Mormon leaders frequently and with the utmost *sang-froid* consigned people to Tophet for offenses far less grievous than the sin against the Holy Ghost. "Zachary Taylor is dead and in hell, and I am glad of it," declared Young, because of real or fancied slights put upon the Mormons by Taylor. A Federal judge sent to the territory angrily protested, when the leader of the Saints coolly told him "he need have no doubt about it, for he would see him when he went there himself."

Upon this mélange of chiliastic dreams and calculating invention, communistic ideas had been engrafted from the start, and later toned down into a system of tithing when they failed to arouse enthusiasm among those who had and who were expected to impart unto those who had not. The system of tithing, as rigorously enforced, is one secret of the church's great power—it provided unlimited sinews of war, which the leaders never scrupled to use in the most effective way. "When I put my hand into one pocket," Brigham

Young is credited with saying, "I put Congress into the other." Through the tithing system millions of dollars are annually poured into the coffers of the church.

Strangest among the many curious ceremonies of the church is that of "endowment"—a sort of revival of heathen mysteries and medieval miracle-plays, closely analogous to some lodge initiations. After purification and anointing with oil, a ritual of dramatic hocus-pocus, doubtless impressive enough to the simple-minded, is gone through; blood-curdling oaths of fidelity and secrecy are imposed, grips are given, and the neophyte carries home his endowment robe, which he henceforth regards as his most precious possession. It is supposed to shield from disease—a theory hardly harmonizing with the fact that every devout Mormon is buried in this garment. It is even claimed to be bullet-proof, and had not Joseph Smith neglected to wear his on the day he was mobbed his enemies could not have harmed him. Certainly this was inexcusable carelessness in a Prophet, who must have known they were coming!

Two leading tenets in the practical theology of the church have roused most of the opposition it has met almost from its earliest day—polygamy, which will be

considered in a later chapter, and the atonement of blood. According to this latter doctrine, there are certain sins that can hope for no pardon upon this earth. Among these are the shedding of guiltless blood, apostasy, marital infidelity on the wife's part, and revealing the inner workings of the Endowment House. Blood alone can atone for these sins—and the Mormons did their best to make the atonement efficacious. Said Brigham Young in a public sermon: "I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain in order to atone for sins. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there would have been a chance in the last resurrection if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty." Human sacrifice, for by no other term could it be described, was one outgrowth of this doctrine; the other development was plain murder.

To carry out these teachings, worthy of Thugs or Assassins, a secret society was formed, sworn to support the head of the church in all things. They were called the "Destroying Angels," or Danites—"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward" (Genesis 49:17). The organization

already existed while the Saints were in Missouri; to this there is ample direct testimony, apart from the circumstantial evidence in the attempt to assassinate the Governor—indeed, its germ may be found at Kirtland, in 1837, when one Grandison Newell charged Smith with inciting a young Mormon neophyte to take his life.

Many murders were charged against this Danite brotherhood, which made the Mormons a terror to their neighbors. No less a witness than the Prophet's own brother declared under oath that before leaving Nauvoo fifteen hundred of the Saints "solemnly swore, in the presence of Almighty God and his holy angels, that they would avenge the blood of Joseph Smith upon the nation, and so teach their children; and that they would henceforth and forever begin and carry out hostility against this nation, and keep the same a profound secret now and forever." This dogma, born of the spirit of revenge in the weak and oppressed, made their later atrocities seem deeds of piety. Its tragic climax, writ large in blood, will be narrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

The Mormon War

We have seen the Mormons, weak and long-suffering under persecution, dissembling their resentment, at worst plotting revenge in secret. Now we shall see them powerful and vindictive, flinging down the gauntlet of defiance to a great nation. Their legislature, in which were now some astute lawyers, went so far as to pass one act that virtually abrogated the entire body of the English Common Law.

Conquering the wilderness, the Mormons came to know their own strength; now they were ready to try it against the mailed fist of civilization. It must be admitted that they showed themselves superior, both in strategics and in diplomacy, to the trained troops and leaders sent against them. The bloody drama of secession, which a few years later was to be enacted upon the national stage, had a prologue upon the great plateau of the West.

President Buchanan deposed Brigham Young from the governorship, which was conferred upon Alfred Cumming; Judge Delana R. Eckels, of Indiana, was made

chief justice of the territory. By June of 1858 over six thousand men were in Utah, or on the march, to re-establish Federal supremacy and maintain the authority of the Federal courts.

"Give us ten years of peace," Brigham Young had said, "and we will ask no odds of the United States." He had foreseen this conflict when his people entered the valley. Now the die of war had been cast, and the crafty old leader prepared to repel aggression by assuming the aggressive. His assurance, whether genuine or theatric, was marvelous. In an immense convocation of his people he announced that at no distant day he would himself become President of the United States, or would bestow the office upon whomsoever he choose. His own courage inspired his followers; there was a fury of preparation for the conflict; every house was turned into an armory and arsenal. Fierce determination glowed in every heart. During divine service at the tabernacle, soon after the approach of the troops was announced, an apostle asked all to raise their hands who would burn down their homes, fell the trees, and lay waste the fields, if the foemen entered the valley. Over four thousand were in that congregation—and every hand was raised. There is no doubt that the United States army, if it had

forced the passes of the mountains and marched upon Salt Lake City, would have found a smouldering Moscow in a howling wilderness.

The Mormons at once inaugurated effective guerrilla warfare. They captured or destroyed the supply-trains of the invading army, stampeded their cattle, burnt every available shelter on the line of advance. The army went into winter quarters destitute and discouraged—almost justifying the contemptuous hyperbole of an elder: "A swarm of long-billed mosquitoes could eat them up at a supper spell." While harmony and patriotic self-sacrifice prevailed at Salt Lake City, factions were snarling at each other's heels in Washington, and unanimity was present only among the horde of contractors who fleeced the government by furnishing the army wretched supplies at exorbitant prices, as in every war. Flour, for instance, cost the trifle of $570 a ton.

The ending of the Mormon War was not creditable to the United States. President Buchanan has been described by a fair historian as "not at heart an unjust man," but he "lacked the requisite backbone." His messages were filled with noble phrases, but he wavered and hesitated, and usually in the end compromised

with evil. That is what he did in the Mormon muddle, in which he lost interest after he had set his headstrong will upon putting the vicious Lecompton constitution through to browbeat Kansas. While the Federal forces sent to Utah were still hibernating near Fort Bridger, Col. Thomas L. Kane, a Pennsylvanian, friendly to the Mormons and perhaps a secret agent or lobbyist of Brigham Young's, was sent by the President with the olive-branch of peace. Kane reached Utah by way of California, and succeeded in his mission of conciliation. The Mormons nominally submitted, and an escort of their militia conducted the new governor to the state capital, where his authority was acknowledged. Amnesty was granted the Saints, and the troops marched into Salt Lake City, which was deserted by its thirty thousand inhabitants, save for a resolute little handful who were to apply the torch if the military took possession. Governor Cumming followed the fleeing Saints, who had already decided to emigrate to Sonora, and prevailed upon them to return. For several years the soldiers were quartered within forty miles of the town, but no further trouble arose. The sport had cost the nation over fifteen millions of dollars, and nothing had been gained.

At the beginning of this "war" occurred the horrible Mountain Meadows massacre. It was the logical outcome of the Blood Atonement doctrine, and there is not the shadow of a doubt that it was instigated by leading Mormons and executed by men of the Nauvoo Legion and Indian allies of the Saints. Parley Pratt, one of the Apostles, the man who had "converted" Sidney Rigdon, had been killed by a man whose wife Pratt had lured into his harem. "Innocent blood" cried to heaven for vengeance. The opportunity soon offered itself. Pratt's slayer was from Arkansas, and now an Arkansan emigrant train was crossing Utah. The killing of Pratt was expiated by those hapless home-seekers, of whom probably none had ever heard of Pratt. Mormon scouts on fleet horses sped in advance of the train, and warned the Saints along the route not to furnish the emigrants food nor afford them shelter. The company would have died of starvation in the midst of abundance, had not the bullets of the Danite avengers cut them off. A hundred and twenty-seven men, women, and children perished in that slaughter. The bodies were left unburied, a prey to the coyotes. A Mormon, moved by pity, buried some of the bleached bones

long after, and is said to have been excommunicated for his act.

Now comes the astounding sequel. In those courts whose authority had just been established by the strong hand of the United States, it was impossible to secure the punishment of the men who were guilty of this crime. Despite evidence of the strongest kind, a Mormon grand jury would not find bills against any man accused, and was discharged by a disgusted judge as "a useless appendage to a court of justice." Some suspected ones were later arrested on bench-warrants, which caused a general stampede of prominent Mormons to the mountains—strong presumptive evidence of uneasy consciences. Eighteen years after the massacre, a single one of the leaders was executed; Bishop John D. Lee was made the scapegoat—the remainder, and the church, went scot-free—though direct and circumstantial evidence of their complicity was not wanting, even reaching to Young.

We have seen the Mormon war closed by an armed truce. Another war—a political struggle—was to be carried forward to a triumphant ending by the astute Saints. The struggle for statehood was never relaxed one moment until the goal had been attained.

CHAPTER IX

In Solomon's Footsteps.

The institution which for years formed the impassable barrier to Utah's admittance into the sisterhood of states—an institution that seems interwoven with the very texture of the church—was polygamy.

It will surprise many people to learn that the *Book of Mormon* in the plainest terms forbids polygamy. Scripture itself is silent upon this point; but Joseph Smith's Bible has an explicit prohibition that can not be equivocated away by any sophistry of exegetics. Here are the words:

"And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime, my heart would rejoice exceedingly. * * * For behold, thus saith the Lord, This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the Scriptures. * * * David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. * * * Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord; for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none; for I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women."

This passage shows that a multiplicity

of wives formed no part of the Prophet's original scheme. Indeed, in the early days of his career he found it difficult enough to support a single wife, much less a harem of forty, as was charged against him later. John Hyde, one of the few apostates who spoke with fairness of the church after seceding, said "polygamy was not the result of Smith's policy, but of his passions." It was the affluence and the opportunities of Nauvoo days that led him into the "grosser crime;" an idle and luxurious mode of life, two hundred and twenty pounds of "too too solid flesh"—these wrought the Prophet's fall from grace.

There is ample evidence of immoralities practiced by Smith and others at Nauvoo, and perhaps earlier, which gradually transpired, and made necessary the "special revelation" given in 1843, sanctioning and commanding a plurality of wives. For nine years that revelation was kept secret, and the practice was publicly denied—partly because Illinois had laws to punish bigamy, but chiefly in order that proselyting might not be hampered. Not until 1852, Young at Salt Lake City officially proclaimed the doctrine, and ever since it has been a cardinal tenet of the church, which simultaneously made the startling discovery that "Jesus had sev-

eral wives, among them Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus."

Simple polygamy was not broad enough for these peculiar Saints, so they invented that doctrine of celestial ensealment which made Mormonism almost a revival of the obscene cult of the Babylonian Mylitta. The practical application of the doctrine meant sexual promiscuity under the sanction of the church. A man might wed as many "spiritual" wives as he could persuade to enter into that relation with him —while they might at the same time be the temporal wives of other men. A woman might have any number of "celestial" husbands—that is, she could be "sealed" to some dead person, who had an earthly proxy, with all marital rights, save that the children born were credited to the Saint in heaven. The workings of this system can not be fully comprehended by the Gentile world—they formed part of the secrets of the Endowment House, whose precincts might not be entered by the profane. But enough is known to make it clear that "any one of either sex can be sealed to any number of persons of the opposite sex, whether married or single."

The Reorganized Church, a protesting sect which sprang up in repudiation of Brigham Young, never countenanced polygamy, but numbers only about 50,000 ad-

herents. The orthodox Saints defended polygamy by an elaborate line of argument, the salient points of which were as follows: If it is not wrong to have one wife, why should the possession of two, or a score, be stigmatized as a crime? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon had many wives and concubines, and it was accounted unto them for righteousness—nowhere in the Bible is there a word of disapproval. Besides, according to Mormon theology, all space is peopled with spirits awaiting incarnation; unless there is plural marriage these spirits can not all be supplied with human bodies to join the ranks of the saints on earth, and so attain to salvation. Such are the scriptural and theological warrants for the practice; no less importance is attached to the argument based upon the experience of mankind and the constitution of human society. Statistics will prove that there are many more women than men; so, unless there is plural marriage, many women must perforce remain unmarried. Monogamy, it is further claimed, makes the one wife more truly the slave of her husband than are the many wives of the polygamist; it promotes licentiousness and fosters prostitution; and finally, it exists in name only, for among the professedly monogamic communities practical polygamy is

just as common as among the openly polygamous.

These plausible contentions may not be lightly dismissed. Let us analyze them in detail.

Admitted, that if it is not wrong for a man to have one wife, it can not be wrong for him to have a dozen. The same premises lead to the conclusion that if it is not wrong for a woman to have one husband, it can not be wrong for her to have a dozen. This the polygamous oracle—who is a man, mark you—makes haste indignantly to deny. But if we admit that woman is man's equal—something more than a slave to minister to his appetites, or a beast of burden to work in his fields—then she has just as strong a claim upon the undivided affections and attentions of her husband as he has upon her love and care.

The Bible does not directly interdict polygamy—true. It will also be difficult to find in it any "Thou shalt not" leveled against arson, gambling, and many other offenses against society. These have become crimes only by the evolution of a complex society. There is no inherent wrong in setting fire to one's barn, provided it entails no injury, direct or indirect, upon any one else—neighbors, heirs, insurance company. There is no essential wrong in carrying goods across a coun-

try's border, provided you do not thereby evade paying your fair proportion of the expense of government, and so increase the proportion others must pay. There could be no valid objection against polygamy, if it might be harmonized with the Golden Rule. A man might have ten wives, provided he could show that he loves each with his whole heart, as he demands that she love him; and provided he accords to each the privilege of espousing ten husbands. Nor does his duty end there. He must show that he can fulfill all his parental obligations springing from each of the ten unions; clothe, feed, educate the offspring of all as he could that of each one. He must show that his conduct does not work injustice or injury to any individual nor to society. But polygamy is convicted of the grossest injustice at the outset—it regards the wife as a possession of the husband, as his inferior; it is a relic of the ages when women were chattels, spoil of war, beasts of burden. It rears a swarm of children unloved. uncared for, untaught. For the home it substitutes the harem. It puts the wife beneath the husband's heel, not at his side.

As for the spirits awaiting incarnation, it may be just as well to let them wait. In the absence of reliable statistics from Mormon writers as to the precise number

of those spirits, there is reason to fear that under Mormon practice the supply of spirits might run short. A dire contingency! In point of fact, this Buddhist speculation, revamped into a Mormon dogma, requires to be proved before it may demand to be refuted.

The sociological arguments are of the flimsiest texture. If women are more numerous than men, the greater number of births under polygamy would increase the disproportion in the same ratio. Whether the one wife of the monogamist is his slave may be left to the sound sense and conscience of any monogamist who has them. To say, further, that monogamy promotes licentiousness and fosters prostitution is equivalent to asserting that polygamy tends to abolish them. Does it? Or does it simply cloak them under legalism? If we admit that practical polygamy exists in monogamic communities, it can not be gainsaid that it is everywhere regarded as an evil to be condemned and eradicated, rather than as an ideal state of society to be desired and promoted.

To sum it up—polygamy may nominally diminish crime by legalizing it; but it practically increases it by making it safe and respectable. There were reported to be fifteen thousand polygamists in Utah—

with a population of about 300,000. Will any one venture to affirm that there were fifteen thousand adulterous husbands in the District of Columbia, which had approximately the same population?

But polygamy was not all the sin of Mormonism. It is a fact, a logical consequence of the doctrine of "spiritual ensealment," that Mormonism was polyandrous as well as polygamous. It meant practical promiscuity—and that, even in the narrower forms of polygamy or polyandry, and considered apart from the mental, moral and physical deterioration it inevitably brings upon the race, is destructive of the home and the family, the bases of individual character and of national greatness. Islam affords an illustration of this. The institution of polygamy enabled the Mahometan tribes rapidly to overrun and conquer a vast stretch of territory; but within two centuries it had sapped the vigor of those races, and the colossal fabric of their empire slowly crumbled into ruin. No polygamous nation is at this day a factor in the world's progress. Turkey, Persia, and China are political ciphers.

A people's greatness is built upon its homes, and the family is the nation in miniature. Home is a kingdom where love is the supreme law—the love of the one

man for the one woman, of the one woman for the one man. From this close union of interests and affections, this loss of self and intermingling of two lives, spring the highest, holiest ideals that human kind has ever known. Only from such homes, only from the nurture of such parents, only out of the sunshine of such ideals, can issue men and women great and strong to do the work of coming time. Without such men and women the Republic is doomed, and the Capitol, like the Alhambra, will be to coming ages only a melancholy relic of a ruined race.

CHAPTER X

Scheming for Statehood

After the collapse at Nauvoo, the shrewd and far-sighted man upon whom had fallen the mantle of "Prophet of the Lord" realized that it was not enough for Mormonism to have its city; it must have a holy land all its own—not merely a Jerusalem, but a Canaan. So, as soon as the region where they settled had become, through the Mexican war, a part of the Union, independent statehood was ever kept in view by the Mormon leaders. The shadowy state of Deseret was organized, but Congress refused to recognize it, and a territorial form of government was extended over the aspiring commonwealth, which was called Utah.

The Mormons that were driven from Illinois to Utah had no very kindly feelings toward the United States. "There's that d—d flag again," cried an elder at landing in California after a trip around the Horn. But persistent agitation and scheming now began, to obtain the statehood that was so essential to the stability and growth of the church. As long as Utah remained a territory, Mormonism

and its leaders would be under Federal tutelage and jurisdiction. Utah's admission to the sisterhood of states, with home rule, with voice and vote in the councils of the nation, would make the church impregnable. So statehood must be attained at whatever price. And the Mormons never hesitated at any means to achieve that end. When might did not avail, recourse was had to meekness. Where steel proved ineffective, gold was used. After braggadocio failed, systematic deception was inaugurated, and the remarkable spectacle presented to the world of a great community playing as one man the role of the hypocrite. From the first memorial to the last lobby, their diplomatic battle for statehood was never relaxed till victory was won.

The insuperable obstacle to Utah's admission was the institution of polygamy. States had been admitted with less population—but public sentiment would not permit an action that would make the government practically powerless in the presence of an offense against society. An application for statehood in 1862 was not only refused, but a stringent law against polygamy in any of the territories was enacted. Nor did the intemperate utterances of prominent Saints tend to improve the status of affairs.

It soon became evident that different tactics must be adopted; the country must be conciliated, and public feeling lulled. Effusive loyalty was counterfeited; the unpatriotic utterances of over-zealous elders were carefully suppressed, and those who made them cautioned. Even this availed nothing—as long as the Saints upheld and practiced polygamy, no political party dared open the door to them; and, as Lorenzo Snow, later president of the church, declared, they would die a thousand deaths sooner than give up this article of their creed. Movements on the government's part to suppress the evil were met with passionate memorials, affirming that the church would obey God rather than man. Judicial procedures to enforce existing acts were quashed, or were too spasmodic to be of any effect; if it came to a trial, this was usually a parody upon justice. Each party was afraid of the other; the representatives of the nation feared to provoke the Saints, while these did not dare openly to defy the nation.

In August of 1877 Brigham Young died, leaving seventeen wives, fifty-six children, and an estate valued at $2,000,000. John Taylor, who had been in Carthage jail and was wounded by the mob that killed Joseph Smith, succeeded to the presidency of

the church. Under Taylor's regime the troubles of the Saints multiplied. He had not the astute mastery, the intuitive knowledge of men, which distinguished Young. Whereas Young had been able to maintain the "divine" institution of polygamy despite Gentile persecution, the church was now hard pressed by its foes. Still, with fanatical tenacity, they held on to this repugnant tenet. Sooner than surrender it, one colony emigrated to Mexico, where they founded a settlement now prosperous and growing; another host invaded Canada, and gained a firm foothold there. The leaders of the hierarchy, who could not or would not leave Utah, had to take to the mountains, or live in concealment, until the day of tribulation should be past. It is told of Wilford Woodruff, the President-Prophet who succeeded Taylor, that while hiding from the officers of the law he cut a field of grain by moonlight with a hand-sickle, beginning in the middle of the field and working outward, cutting all but the outer waving walls that hid him. Such was the unbending spirit and unwearying energy of those men.

Persecutions thickened—indeed, the national government stepped very close to the bounds of constitutional authority in its repressive measures. The Edmunds act of 1882 resulted in the disfranchisement of

twelve thousand polygamists within two years. It was even proposed to abolish the legislature, and govern Utah by a commission appointed by the President. New applications for statehood were turned down; appeals to the Supreme Court resulted in nothing. Many Saints were cast into prison—principally on charges of illegal cohabitation, for polygamy, owing to the secrecy of the marriage rites, could rarely be proved; still the practice continued unabated, hiding from the world's eye in the cloistered chambers of Temple and Endowment House.

Then came the draconian Edmunds-Tucker act of 1887. Vast possessions of the church were escheated. Congress took the right of suffrage away from women, who, strangely enough, through their implicit obedience to the priesthood, had for seventeen years formed the mightiest bulwark of polygamy. Then followed a proposition, which passed both houses of Congress in 1890, to disfranchise all Mormons, whether polygamists or not, as Idaho already had done.

In this crisis the change of policy was adopted which saved the church from disintegration and gained statehood for Utah. Stubborn force had failed; resort was now had to hypocrisy and fraud. Prophet Wilford Woodruff had a revelation as oppor-

tune as any that ever came to Smith. In a petition to the President, asking for pardon and restoration of the franchise to the convicted polygamists, the statement was made that "in September, 1890, the present head of the church, in anguish and prayer, cried to God for help for his flock, and received permission to advise the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints that the law commanding polygamy was henceforth suspended." Suspended for how long?

The hypocritical game was played with consummate cunning. Accounts were published abroad of the disfavor with which polygamy was now viewed, and of its decline; prominent Mormons denounced it; a plank against it, formulated by Mormons, was adopted by a territorial convention; a prohibition of it was even suggested as an amendment to the constitution of the United States.

At the same time the Mormons suddenly became Republicans and Democrats, the old People's party of the church, opposed to the Liberal party of the Gentiles, being abandoned. It was hinted, even bluntly promised, that whichever party gave Utah statehood would receive its electoral vote and its congressional and senatorial support. The ruse succeeded completely. President Harrison extended amnesty to

polygamists, and then, under Cleveland's administration, on the first day of January, 1896, Utah became a state, after having been refused admittance six times.

The crafty apostles had caught the old political parties with guile. It is evident, from the events of later years, that it never had been the intention to abandon polygamy—that it was not even suspended, as they professed; but that old polygamous relations were continued, and new ones clandestinely formed, as before. Utah is a state, and the Mormon Senator, Reed Smoot, is one of the most powerful machine leaders at Washington. He is one of the ablest of the old-school politicians, and his influence at home may be measured by the fact that he was able to carry Utah for Taft in the election of 1912, when Taft secured only eight electoral votes out of 531 in all the states of the Union.

CHAPTER XI

Acts of the Apostles

The Mormons are the Moravians of America, by their missionary zeal and heroic sacrifice. This has been the chief secret of their marvelous success and of the rapid spread of their doctrines. Two apostles, Hyde and Kimball, were sent forth as early as 1837, and within three years counted over four thousand converts in Christian England. For over half a century there went forth on an average a hundred missionaries annually; to-day more than three hundred set out each year to preach the latter-day gospel, and two thousand elders are busy in various fields. Any priest is liable at any moment to be sent anywhere by his superiors. Obedience is the cardinal virtue. The elder so commanded goes forth, and must even provide his own support until the contributions of his converts maintain him. There are no Mormon missionary debts!

The absolute abnegation of self which characterizes these men is well illustrated by a story told of Martin Harris, in the early days of the church. He pestered

a man to purchase a copy of the *Book of Mormon,* till the man angrily struck him a blow in the face. Instantly Harris turned the other cheek, and at the same time opened the book in his hand at the page where Smith's garbled version of the Sermon on the Mount enjoins this attitude in persecution. Such incidents could not fail of making deep impressions.

The second reason of their success, given missionary fervor and fanatical devotion, is found in the recognition of their limitations. They soon realized that it was almost useless to turn to the intelligent or the well-to-do, so they strove to win the ignorant and lowly. Men they were after, not money; brawn, not brain; if they gained these things, as they shrewdly foresaw, the others would be added unto them. In large measure it was a process of "natural selection." The wealthy and educated classes laughed at Mormon pretensions and were not dazzled by Mormon promises. The unlearned readily accepted the new revelation, with its slavishly literal interpretation of Scripture; swallowed the stories of Mormon miracles, and the prophecies of the world's impending doom. The poor snapped greedily at the bait of the Mormon paradise, where want was unknown, and fabulous wealth would soon abound, and the Lord rained manna

down from heaven. The claim to be the "chosen people" of the Lord also had its unfailing fascination for religious vanity.

Others, especially in foreign lands, where dissenters from state churches labored under many disabilities, were attracted by glowing protestations of liberalism. "The kingdom of God," declared one effusion, "consists in correct principles, and it mattereth not what a man's religious faith is—whether he be a Presbyterian or a Methodist, or a Baptist, or a Latter Day Saint, or 'Mormon,' or a Campbellite, or a Catholic, or Episcopalian, or Mahometan, or even Pagan, or anything else. If he will bow the knee, and with his tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, and will support good and wholesome laws for the regulation of society, we hail him as a brother, and will stand by him as he stands by us in these things; for every man's faith is a matter between his own soul and his God alone." With such utterances the down-trodden, the illiterate, the discontented of foreign countries were attracted to "the land flowing with milk and honey." The Perpetual Emigration Fund procured their passage across the ocean, and, once at the seat of Mormon power, they were speedily reconciled to the peculiar doctrines of the Saints.

The Mormons saw that immigration was

a blessing to be desired, not a curse to be turned aside, as demagogues and deluded labor leaders stigmatize it. This preempting of immigration was one of the shrewdest features of Mormon propaganda. They did not send evangelists into city slums and rural settlements after the strangers had imbibed the air of freedom. They did not lie in wait for the immigrants at Castle Garden, like other sects. They sent their preachers to foreign shores, to preach Mormonism *and* America, till converts by thousands soon crossed the seas. Over thirty thousand had been won in England alone in the first twenty years of their activity. They carried their gospel to Malta, to South Africa, to India, to the Sandwich Islands.

The methods of the early missionaries were much like those of the Salvation Army to-day. Beating drums, blowing trumpets, chanting hymns for which they had appropriated catchy popular tunes, they gathered audiences upon the highways and byways, and harangued them, the *Book of Mormon* in hand. Being American farmers and artisans, the apostles were mostly fine specimens of manhood, which gave them added standing among the degenerate populations of Europe. Jules Verne, who doubtless admired in Joseph Smith a kindred genius,

bears witness to this in *Une Ville Flottante*: " 'Who is yon tall man of haughty mien?' I asked. 'He is a Mormon,' was the Doctor's reply. 'One of their elders, a great preacher in the city of the Saints. What a splendid type of manhood! Look at his proud eye, his noble countenance, his dignified carriage!' " That man was Abram Hatch.

Here we have the whole Mormon missionary scheme. They are pursuing the same tactics to-day, toned down to suit the times. They are proceeding more cautiously, but no less determinedly. Though they sometimes attack the citadels of culture—Congressman Brigham H. Roberts was the church's representative at the World's Congress of Religions in Chicago—their preference is for the more primitive communities of the West, the Northwest, and the South. Paul's motto—"This one thing I do"—they have ever in mind. All the eloquence of fanaticism is concentrated upon the task of spreading their doctrine. Wily and smooth-spoken, with plausible reasonings and ingenious inventions, they soon put to rout the meager theological learning of their victims.

The astute Mormon apologist is able to silence his critics by pointing to the vagaries and superstitions of others that profess to be more enlightened. To the

Methodist he would say, "Was not John Wesley's lame horse cured by faith?" The Lutheran he would ask, "Did not the founder of your faith throw an ink-pot at the Devil?" Coming down to our own times, he would inquire, "Did not Father Ignatius and seven others see the Virgin Mary on the meadow of Llanthony Abbey, on September 15, 1880?" And does not Mrs. Stetson, once leader of the Christian Scientists in New York City, confidently await the resurrection of Mrs. Eddy—"it may be to-day; it may be next week"? Pointing to such phenomena, the astute Mormon apologist insists that his faith imposes no greater tax upon human credulity than theirs.

Not only are the missionaries armed with such edged arguments, they are often proficient in other arts that win favorable opinions for them—along with cash for their maintenance. When Elder George J. Adams, who was an actor, was sent to convert Philadelphia, on arriving there he played *Richard III* for a week to raise a missionary fund. He made Shakespeare an advance agent for Joe Smith.

Knowing the opposition they are likely to encounter, the Saints seek to establish themselves in a community, and ingratiate themselves at the firesides of the people, before their character and mission become

known. Not until they are sure of their victims is the mask removed. Whole families are gained over in this way before they know it is Mormonism that is weaving its meshes about them. When they learn it, the poison has done its work; their minds are saturated with subtle sophistries, and no reasoning can prevail.

This indefatigable activity, supplemented by the missionary literature sent broadcast, is bound to tell in the end. The church does not endeavor to displace Christianity, but to supplement and complete it. This veils suspicion; the seed of doctrine once sown, no opposition can root it out of simple minds, but rather tends to establish and strengthen it.

If they are persecuted, the missionaries bear it with resignation, and so deepen the impression they have made. Every elder beaten and tarred and feathered is an argument in favor of the church for which he suffers indignity.

CHAPTER XII

What Will be the End?

President Wilford Woodruff died in 1898, and was succeeded by Lorenzo Snow. He died in 1901, and was succeeded by Joseph F. Smith, nephew of the Prophet. This last of the tribe died in November, 1918, and the present head of the Saints is Heber Jedediah Grant.

The church has prospered greatly in these latter days. Its four grand temples cost over six million dollars to build. Its Tabernacle, comfortably seating 7,000 people, with a remarkable organ and choir, is one of the wonders of the great West. To the faithful, these are signs of the divine favor. God must look upon the Mormons as his beloved children, or he would not bless them so abundantly.

There is no doubt that the practice of polygamy was clandestinely resumed, if ever it had been suspended. The church is active in politics, if ever it was quiescent, even going so far as to dictate which of its members shall be Democrats, which Republicans. Being a sovereign state, Utah is governed by its own citizens; and these are overwhelmingly Mormon, while

even the Gentile elements largely sympathize with them. The church practically rules the state. True, Utah was admitted under the provisions of an enabling act forever prohibiting plural marriages; amnesty was extended to the polygamous Saints only upon condition of their dissolving illicit relations—but these provisions were disregarded, that condition was not observed. True, the constitution of Utah itself forbids polygamy—but laws, to be effective, must be enforced. Joseph F. Smith, the last president of the church, left five widows when he died, and was the father of 43 children. Heber J. Grant, the present head, married three wives. There has been no reason for any change in the Mormon attitude toward polygamy except political strategy. What is to be done?

The question came before the people in 1899 in a form which demanded an immediate answer. The people of Utah elected Brigham H. Roberts to Congress, despite the storm of protest arising from all parts of the country. He was a confessed polygamist, a defender of that institution, and his campaign was conducted upon this issue. The question was directly put to Utah: Will you condone and approve polygamy? The answer was Roberts's election by a majority of six

thousand, but Congress declared his seat vacant; again the Saints had reckoned without their host.

The fantastic accounts of Anti-Mormon Apostles, like the tales of "escaped nuns" about Catholic convents, need not be taken too seriously. There are people who delight in being thrilled with horror, and such lecturers cater to that craving. Facts open to the light of day are quite sufficient to convince rational men that Mormonism is not an illuminating factor in American life nor a purifying influence in American politics. But to tar and feather Mormon missionaries is a confession by rival sectarians that they are feared—a confession neither in accordance with firm faith nor Christian charity. To every creed must be granted the right to be heard—truth is impregnable.

The Mormon propaganda can be counteracted only by a campaign of education. To spread far and wide the facts as to its origin, to expose the dubious character of its founders and the absurdity of its doctrines, to show its radical antagonism to modern institutions—this is the only course that will prevail. There has been too much ignorant denunciation, too much aggressive malevolence in the past. These have always reacted in favor of Mormonism.

Most important of all would be the political redemption of Utah. This, it would seem, could be accomplished by encouraging the influx of Gentile population—by guiding thither educated immigrants from foreign shores and homeseekers of our own land. In the course of two decades the Mormon ascendancy would be destroyed; existing laws, which are ample, could be enforced; and the great octopus, shorn of its political power, would be obliged to assume its proper station among the ranting sects that come and go and are forgotten—dead sea fruit of ashes, which reason at last will scatter to the winds.

Mormonism supplies an instructive object lesson for the lay student of Comparative Religion. It shows how easily a new religion can be launched—and new religions are still being launched, as witness Koreshanity, the Mazdaznan, and others even more popular and hardly less fantastic. Of the human species perhaps not more than five per cent. are able to think. The vast majority only think they think. Ninety-five per cent are sheep, following some leader, bowing down to some idol, greedily swallowing the predigested mental food prepared for them by pastors, politicians, professors, and the press, four P's in one pod. Education does not help

very much, as an educated fool is wiser only in his own conceit. What may be called "the newspaper mind" in our day, an unconscious reverence for the printed word, animates the vast mob that runs after every new folly; in a few years even the exertion of reading the daily journals may be too much for intellects fed upon moving-picture films. If that is true of our age, it need not surprise any one that Mormonism won its way easily a century ago, nor that the pathway of the human race, from the prehistoric mists through all the centuries of progress, is strewn with husks of fallen creeds and bleaching bones of dead faiths.

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